



## **Lively Online Professional Development for the Common Core: Introducing Pepper**

### **Self-paced courses help educators become Common Core specialists**

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA – January 13, 2014 – WestEd and Public Consulting Group (PCG) today announced the launch of Pepper – self-paced, online professional development for educators implementing Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

To help teachers and districts successfully understand and implement the new rigorous standards, Pepper provides unlimited access to a series of online courses in Math and English Language Arts (ELA). The initial launch includes six courses, with additional courses to be released throughout the school year.

“To prepare our students for college and careers, our teachers need to gain mastery in instruction aligned to the Common Core. We designed Pepper to help teachers across the nation become CCSS specialists, collaborating with other educators to create solutions for 21st century learners,” says Glen Harvey, WestEd CEO.

Pepper uses a supportive online environment in which educators can master courses at their own speed, collaborate with others, develop a portfolio, and become specialists in standards-aligned teaching and learning strategies that lead to student success.

“We’re thrilled to be partnering with WestEd on this important online resource for educators. PCG Education is dedicated to helping schools navigate the shift to Common Core,” says Grant Blair, Director of PCG Education. “The timing is critical and the content is exceptional.”

Benefits of Pepper online professional development include:

- Self-paced, 24/7 access to CCSS courses in Math and ELA/Literacy
- Progressive mastery of the knowledge and use of CCSS concepts
- Digital resources for students and teachers corresponding to each course
- Collaboration with other CCSS specialists in online forums

- Archived personal portfolios with reflection journals and completion badges

Pepper also includes a bank of next-generation technology-enhanced items to prepare teachers for the new, national Smarter Balanced and PARCC assessments.

Pepper is created through a partnership between WestEd and PCG Education. Since 1966, WestEd has been a leader in research- and standards-based education improvement, and trains thousands of teachers each year. PCG Education's on-the-ground K–12 consulting experience in states across the U.S. spans more than 26 years.

Pepper is built on the robust edX platform, with CCSS course development provided by WestEd specialists and supported by PCG Education's national team of consultants.

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**About WestEd** – WestEd, a national nonpartisan, nonprofit research, development, and service agency, works with education and other communities to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. WestEd has 16 offices nationwide, from Washington and Boston to Arizona and California. Its corporate headquarters are in San Francisco. More information about WestEd is available at [WestEd.org](http://WestEd.org).

**About PCG Education** – PCG Education is a division of Public Consulting Group (PCG), a leading provider of management consulting and technology to help public sector education, health, human services, and other government clients achieve their performance goals and better serve populations in need.

PCG Education currently works with more than 4,000 school districts and has contracts with 13 state education agencies to provide services and software solutions that focus on student achievement.